

Washington, DC - The U.S. House of Representative's attempt to override President George Bush's veto of legislation renewing the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), [H. R. 976](#), was blocked today by a vote of 273 to 156. An override would have required 286 votes.

"President Bush and his allies in Congress have once again demonstrated that they are completely out of touch with the needs of working families. Vermonters long ago recognized that providing children with health care is both cost effective and the right thing to do," said Rep. Peter Welch. "The President has no problem pouring hundreds of billions of dollars into a failed policy in Iraq, yet he turns a deaf ear to hard working Americans who simply want to bring their children to a doctor when they are sick. His stubborn refusal to help these children is a national disgrace."

The vetoed bipartisan legislation extends health care coverage for 6.6 million children currently enrolled in the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) and provides coverage for an additional 4 million children currently without health care.

The bill also overturns a pending Bush administration rule change that could threaten to cut coverage for hundreds of thousands of kids now covered under SCHIP. That change, announced in August, would tighten restrictions on states like Vermont that cover children above 250 percent of the federal poverty level and would mean more than 2,000 Vermont kids would lose their health coverage.

In addition, it reverses another Bush administration rule change announced this summer that would cost Vermont more than \$20 million each year by barring states like Vermont from using Medicaid funds for rehabilitation services for students with disabilities in kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade.

On original passage, the bill received overwhelming bipartisan support, passing the Senate 67-29 and the House 265-159.